

THE  
REAL SPEECH

OF

COLONEL WILLIAM NAPIER,

DELIVERED AT THE

GREAT REFORM DINNER  
AT BATH,

ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 5, 1837.

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Bath:

E. WILLIAMS, MILSOM STREET.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

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1837.

THE

REAL ESTATE

COLONEL WILLIAM WATKINS

OF THE

GRAND NATIONAL BANK

AT BATH

ON THURSDAY JANUARY 4 1857

AND

IN WILLIAM WATKINS STREET

PRICE TWO PENCE

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## SPEECH.

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GENTLEMEN,

I am not a good hand at compliments; but I thank you sincerely and heartily for the manner in which you have received me, and shall proceed at once to speak to the toast; namely, "*Justice to Ireland.*" Now I am not one of those who look upon Ireland as something separate and distinct from the rest of the Empire, nor upon the Irish people as outcasts, upon whom Whigs or Tories may practise, to ascertain how far oppression can be carried with impunity. I hold the Irish people to be part and parcel of the great British family; and I believe they will obtain justice when the whole people obtain it, and not before. That is, when we obtain Ministers so enlightened, that in passing a great measure they will not stop to consider whether the persons to be affected by it are Catholics or Protestants, Churchmen or Dissenters, Englishmen, Irishmen, or Canadians; but whether the measure itself be one founded on the eternal, immutable principles of justice. And how are we to obtain such a Government? Why! by watching closely and controlling the acts of every Minister, and by turning out those who do not promise well. Aye! but there are those who will promise, and promise, and yet never perform! How are we to deal with such men? how are we to arrive at just conclusions as to the probable conduct of such men? I answer, by referring to their past actions; by comparing them with their former professions, we shall be able to anticipate their future conduct, no matter what their professions may be; for in political, as in other matters, experience is the surest guide.

In this view, then, I shall recall to your recollection the leading political events of the last six years, because I think that some historical lessons may be drawn from them applicable to the present posture of affairs.

You all remember, then, that about six years ago, the Duke of WELLINGTON, without any apparent reason, I believe without any reason at all, but in one of those moments of darkness which will at times come over the brightest intellect, took upon himself to declare, that the Constitution under which we lived was practically the very best on the face of



the earth, theoretically, the noblest, the wisest the imagination of man ever conceived; and that, consequently, it would be at once the greatest crime and the greatest absurdity to reform it. And you all recollect how, when his Grace had so spoken, the whole British nation arose with one accord to tell him that he was wrong; to tell him that the Constitution which he thought so wise, so pure, and perfect, was, in theory, dashed and brewed with many absurdities; in practice, oppressive and corrupt: that no Constitution, pretending to be a free one, ever yet needed reform more; and that reformed it should be. Oh! it was a glorious burst of national feeling; it was a glorious out-break of liberty; it was the insurrection of reason; it was the voice of God speaking through the lips of a whole people.

Gentlemen, in the moral world there are men so proud, so obdurate of heart, that they will defy the Almighty; and there are others so cunning in their foolishness that they think to deceive the Deity: so in the political world there are men, and those are the Tories, so obdurate in their tyranny, that, stiff-necked generation of vipers as they are, they defy that political god, the People; and there are others, and those are the Whigs, so guileful and so silly, that they hope to deceive that political omnipotence to its own hurt. But when the thunder rolls, the Atheist shudders; and so, when the thunder of reform was heard, when that pealing shout of British liberty went forth, the Whigs and Tories, those political Atheists, trembled. They dreaded and hated the sound alike, and they shewed that they did so; but each after its own kind. That is to say, the Tories receded, shaking their clenched hands, and uttering imprecations with impotent fury; while the Whigs came forward crouching and fawning to the people, and, expressing a joy which they only felt from the teeth outwards, offered themselves as leaders of that movement which they were determined to mislead. And at their head came Lord GREY; that Lord GREY who, only two years before, thinking, probably, that Toryism was in the ascendant for ever, had declared that he had greatly modified, if not entirely changed his early opinions about reform, and was resolved to stick by his order. But now, seeing an opening for obtaining power, and with it the emoluments of power—for his ambition seems to be of that sordid nature—this same Lord GREY, pushing his order aside for the moment, offered himself as the chief of the movement, and the people, good easy souls, accepted him. What followed? Why, the moment he seized the helm, the wind was taken out of the sails of reform. The good ship heaved and laboured, there was much tossing and agitation, but no progress was made towards the desired port. Delays and difficulties arose on every side, we heard of nothing but obstacles. At first we were told the King was against us; we did not believe it, and his Majesty soon gave the lie to the calumny. Then it was not the King, it was the people about him, the Court was adverse. That we believed, and cared little for; and we believed, also, that the Lords were against us, and we cared as little for their opposition as we did for the enmity of their nominees in the House of Commons. We heard, also, and we believed, because we saw the rabid fury, the foaming phrensy, of the children of corruption; we saw all that battered and fattened upon the vile system, and at their head the Parsons, inflamed even to maniac rage, ramping against us;—but we did not hear of the secret enmity of the Whigs, and yet that was the real obstacle,



and it was so proved. For when the vexed and indignant people rose once more, and told the Oligarchs, the whole crew, that if the loud voice was insufficient to obtain reform, the strong right arm would be stretched forth to take it, all obstacles vanished, and Lord GREY gave us the Reform Bill; but he took occasion to declare, that it went further in the way of liberty than he wished or intended, and that it was forced from him by the people!

Gentlemen, I wish you to pause here and consider this first historical lesson. Here we find that the great character of the Duke of WELLINGTON, the aversion of the Court, the dogged pride of the Lords, the insolence of their nominees in the House of Commons, and the fury of their hangers-on out of the House, joined to all the wiles of the Whigs, were utterly powerless against the expressed will of the people. That is a lesson which should sink deep into your minds, aye, into your very souls, there to be nourished for application when time shall again be fitting.

But, Gentlemen, Lord GREY said the Reform Bill went further than he wished or intended, and should be a final measure. Let us analyze it, then, and see if it be indeed a Bill of liberty, one on which a real patriot would rest his claim to the gratitude of his countrymen; whether it be indeed a Bill suitable to the civilization of the age. Gentlemen, in a Bill for establishing freedom, British freedom, I should have expected to find three provisions, to my notion indispensable to real liberty. First, I should have looked for a clause extending the right of voting to household if not to universal suffrage. The last I would say myself, in order that the old conceit, the old insult, the old mockery, namely, "That no Englishman could be taxed without his own consent," should cease to be a mockery and become a reality. Next, I looked for a provision to protect the poor and honest voter in the exercise of his right of suffrage. And, lastly, I expected to find that the Representative, the man elected, was to be frequently sent back to his constituents, that he might be taught and know that if he was a law-maker, a great man, and above control in the House; he was, when asking the suffrages of his fellow-citizens, their servant, and bound to account for his public conduct. Now were any one of these vital points cared for in this Bill, which Lord GREY said went further in the way of liberty than he wished or intended, and was to be a final measure, I may be told that the right of suffrage was extended, and I admit that nominally it was so, but practically it has been restricted, and is likely to be still more so, by the complicated and unjust nature of the qualification clauses, which are such as to make it a snare. There is nothing fixed, nothing regular; nothing certain. Here, a ten pound holding gives the right; there, a fifty pound holding. In one place, birth gives the right; in another, a corrupt and Municipal Corporation, as in Dublin, confers it. In Boroughs, a man must pay a shilling each time of registering: in Counties, he pays his shilling once and for aye; but, Gentlemen, in all places, and at all times, you must pay your poor rates and taxes. The Bill, therefore, is not a Bill of freedom, but a bill of taxation. What! I shall hear some Whig exclaim, What! would you give a man who does not pay his taxes, the right to vote? Give then, I reply, give every man who does pay his taxes a vote. But, when you have paid your poor rates and taxes, when you have paid your shilling, that noble test of an Englishman's qualification for freedom,—when you have paid all, then are you sure of your vote? No! some malignant neighbour, some Paul Pry, some Tory, or



some Whig agent, may write objected against your qualification, and you must lose your time and money, dancing attendance on a revising Barrister, to prove your right. And when you have proved it, are you then secure? No! an ignorant, or a negligent, or a drunken, or a bribed Overseer, may fail by accident, or purposely, in the forms of his duty; or a hired Barrister, paid by the Government, which must always be more or less inimical to freedom, paid, I say, by the Government, and chosen by the Judges, and you all know what those reverend and grave personages are in politics; a hired Barrister, I say, thus chosen, and thus paid, shall in the plenitude of his ignorance, or of his conceit, or of his caprice, or in the plenitude of his Toryism, or of his Whigism, shall disfranchise you, because of the Overseer's fault, or pretended fault, aye, disfranchise you: not the individual alone; but the whole parish, aye, hundreds of parishes; they have done so, and from this monstrous injustice there is no appeal, there is no redress. And yet this is the Bill which goes farther in the way of freedom than my Lord GREY desired! Gentlemen, I say again, that it is not a Bill of freedom, but a Bill of taxation, a snare, a piece of cunning machinery, in which every wheel is purposely clogged, that the work may be spoiled. It is a Bill which offers to the indolent and apathetic voter a cup of bitters, and to the poor and honest elector a cup of poison.

Gentlemen, such are the direct palpable evils of this Bill; but its indirect workings, the moral mischief which it involves, is of a still more pernicious tendency. And that you may understand this, I will paint a picture, the truth of which you can all attest. I will suppose a man of a majestic person, and a soul capable of the highest patriotism, one of nature's nobles, but poor—for God has not confined all perfections of body and mind to the rich; I will suppose this man to be skilled in one of those useful mechanic arts which have raised England to her present pitch of greatness; I will suppose that he has been pressed, that he has served his country in arms, that his breast is scarred by the enemy's sword, that he has sufficient education to observe and to read passing political events; and, finally, I will suppose him to have a large family, and therefore a deep, the deepest interest in the tranquillity and welfare of the state.

Such a man shall offer his vote; and instantly some clerk of the hustings will thus address him, What brings you here? I come to give my vote. Your vote! your hands are dirty! you are a mechanic! Have you a right to vote? Have you a ten pound holding? Have you paid your poor rates and Taxes? Have you settled with the Overseer? Have you passed muster with the hired Tory Barrister? Have you paid your shilling? No! none of these things. What then brings you here? I come, as a freeborn Englishman, to give my vote for honest Representatives, to vote for men who, with hearts to feel for the poor and lowly, have spirit to protect their just rights, and sense to guide their feelings. I come to vote for such men as Mr. ROEBUCK and Sir WM. MOLESWORTH! Sir, you are not worthy to vote. Not worthy! What! have I not served my country, have I not been thought worthy to spill my blood in her defence; behold my scars! No matter, Sir, you are not worthy to be one of England's freemen, you have not paid your shilling, stand back, therefore, amongst the bondsmen, stand back, I say, and let that crawling, swindling knave, who stands crouching in the shadow of your towering figure, come forward; let him, with just sense enough to know the value of a vote, and just



patriotism enough to sell it to the highest bidder, come forward; he is worthy to be a British freeman, let the swindling knave come forward. Do you doubt? Fool! why he tacks esquire to his name, and says he has a park, he has paid his shilling, he is worthy to be an English freeman; he is to make laws for such as you; stand back! stand back! amongst the bondsmen. And, Gentlemen, the noble of nature does stand back amongst the bondsmen; and the swindling knave comes forward to vote, nay, he is voted for, and becomes himself a Legislator. And this is the Bill which my Lord GREY said went farther than he intended in the way of Reform. But can we stop here? What was his next movement in favour of freedom? Gentlemen, I will pass over the avidity with which he seized upon the public purse, the copious manner in which he poured its contents into the pockets of his family. I pass it over, because the amount, though enormous in itself, was not such as to excite indignation, it excited disgust and ridicule; Lord GREY was called the Minister for *domestic relations*; but it is scarcely worth dwelling upon, save, as marking the public propensities of the man and his family of politicians. But what shall be said of his next measure, and not his alone, but all the Whigs; for with one or two noble exceptions, they gathered around him, and stamped, and bleated like Southdown sheep round an old bell-wether.

Gentlemen, about thirty years before the Reform Bill was passed, the Union between England and Ireland was enacted, I will not say established: it was enacted, and during the progress of that measure Lord GREY was distinguished by the vehemence of his opposition. He said in substance, if not in the very words, that it was a measure founded in blood, and carried by corruption: that it was injurious, unjust, impolitic, unendurable. That if the Irish were then so weak, that it could be thrust down their throats, it would still stick in their gorge, and but a few years would pass ere they would throw it up again; in fine, that they would and ought to demand its repeal. Now, when the Irish Patriots, after their long night of suffering, saw the dawn of freedom breaking in the East, and by its light beheld the man, who had thus spoken of their nation, at the head of that movement, they naturally concluded, that the time was favourable for demanding that justice which they had so long, and so vainly invoked. Ireland, they said, has never yet enjoyed political equality with England and Scotland. Even in this Reform Bill she has not had her fair measure. Now then give us that equality, that justice, or repeal the Union, and give us a Parliament of our own, that we may do justice to ourselves. The cry was well timed, the argument cogent, the principle just. What was Lord GREY's answer, what, I say, was the answer of Lord GREY and the Whigs? Give you a repeal of the Union, we will give you civil war first! We will let loose the Orange ferocity and brutality upon you, we will give you all the horrors of civil strife, we will give you the torch to burn, the sword to smite, the cord to hang, the scourge to torture, but we will not give you a repeal of the Union. And when they cried out, Give us then justice, he gave them the Coercion Bill; that Bill which his colleague Lord STANLEY declared to be especially intended to teach the people. Mark! not the Irish alone, but emphatically the people, the whole people; that Governments must be feared before they are loved. That Coercion Bill, which Lord GREY and his Whigs, when they were reproached with its enormities, as exceeding even the abominations of the Tories, declared they had purposely made so odious, so unconstitutional, so tyrannical, so utterly subversive of all



the principles of freedom, that it was impossible it could ever become a precedent for the future—thus, claiming the horrid distinction of being pre-eminent in their oppressions of a wretched people, who, for seven hundred years, had known nothing but oppression. Gentlemen, this is another historical lesson, which you would do well to reflect upon. But you will naturally ask, What motive Lord GREY and the Whigs had for such conduct? Oh! Gentlemen, they had a motive, and when I have shewn you what it was, you will, I think, have another lesson to consider—and one which it will require but little wit to make the application of.

Gentlemen, Lord GREY and the Whigs knew very well, that if the Union were repealed, the Irish House of Commons would not be restored upon the model of the old corrupt English House, nor yet upon the new English Reform House; they knew that it would be based upon something like universal suffrage, upon the vote by ballot, and with frequent recurrence to fresh elections. They knew, also, that such a House of Commons would at once lay bare the wounds and sores of the unhappy Irish people, and what no Whig ever dreamed of, endeavour to heal them. That then the unjust judge would be chased from the bench, the sectarian sheriff would be forbid to pack the jury with Orange bloodhounds, thirsting for the lives of their Catholic countrymen, that the nuisance of Protestant ascendancy, which means in Ireland peculation and robbery of the many by the few, would be abated. That tithes would be abolished, not to be put into the landlord's pockets, but to form a fund for a good poor law in Ireland. That the Irish Established Church, that scarlet strumpet of the state, would no longer be permitted to insult the modesty of religion, playing her bloody and fantastic tricks before a frowning God. That her ministers would no longer be suffered to dip the Bible in human gore, in the blood of the murdered child, and thrust it reeking into the widowed mother's face, telling her to read, and be thus converted to the true faith. Gracious heaven! the true faith! the religion of murder and torture.

Gentlemen, Lord GREY and his Whigs knew this, and they knew that this example would be followed in England; and that some strange changes must take place here also; that church rates might not be collected, that tythes might be better arranged, that bishops might be relieved from their duties in the House of Lords, that the House of Lords itself, to use Lord GREY's own expression, might be set in order. Adieu then to sinecure places and unmerited pensions! Adieu to jobbing and public plunder! Adieu to the department of domestic relations! Adieu to those costly commissions of inquiry, invented by the Whigs, to satisfy the cravings of their hungry dependents, without trenching upon the profits of their Tory clerks and underlings of office; without whose experience, they could not carry on the affairs of the country for a week; for in all matters of public business, there is nothing so ignorant, nothing so incapable, as a Whig. Gentlemen, Lord GREY and the Whigs saw all this as clearly as Belshazzar saw the hand-writing on the wall; but, more learned than Belshazzar, they did not require a Daniel to tell them, that the reign of corruption was passing away; and hence you see, that their Coercion Bill, and their menaces of civil war, were not directed so much against Ireland, and the repeal of the Union, as against England and real Reform. And yet, I have this night heard him and them praised by a Radical, as meritorious Reformers. But Lord GREY went too fast, even for his own party and object; vigorous Lord GREY was too vigorous. His own followers forced him to resign;



and this he was the more ready to do, first, because he had gorged all his family, even to the twentieth border cousin, with the public money, and, secondly, because he left behind him a man, who he knew would with more art, and less apparent vigour, work out his own principles of Government. That man was Lord ALTHORP, and the proof that he did act on the same principles as Lord GREY is this; he also threatened Ireland with civil war; and one of his followers, Lord MORPETH, addressing his electors of Yorkshire, at that time, called upon them to vote for him, not he said to keep out the Tories but to put down the Radicals, and Lord MORPETH was and is Secretary of State for Ireland. His Lordship was not very wise in his generation; he was not quite so subtle as the serpent; but he was frank, at least, and told his real feelings and policy of his party—yes, to put down the Radicals, the people, that was the object of the Whigs. But these Radicals—that people who were too proud to stoop to WELLINGTON, too brave to shrink from Lord GREY's vigour—were too sagacious to be beguiled by Lord ALTHORP, and his Lordship was forced to retire with the reputation of having added contempt to the hatred with which this Lord GREY's government was generally regarded by the nation. Thus the second Whig experiment failed, and we obtained the present government under Lord MELBOURNE. Now, Gentlemen, I have often declared to you that I looked upon my Lord MELBOURNE to be an honest sincere English gentleman. Well! I say so still; and I believe it. But my Lord MELBOURNE has colleagues of whom I cannot say as much; and two years' experience of my Lord MELBOURNE's administration has convinced me that he wants that fervid energy of patriotism which ought to characterize a leader of the people at this critical period. He fights the battle of his own government very well, and boldly against Lord LYNCHURST in the House of Lords; but he does not fight the battle of reform—the battle of freedom—out of the House. He makes no appeal to the people, and his colleagues even repel their advances. Lord MELBOURNE is, therefore, indolent or apathetic; or he is overborne by his colleagues, or he is afraid of the people: and it is time to tell him that he must change his system, or he must make room for a better man. For of what consequence is it to the people of England whether their rights are trampled upon by Tory insolence, or lost by Whig apathy or Whig treachery?

Gentlemen, we have been deafened with the praises of the Whigs in newspapers, at dinners, at public meetings, everywhere we hear of their merits; their exertions in the cause of liberty: that they have given us the great Reform Bill; that they have given a constitution to India in the distant East; that they have emancipated the Negroes in the West; that they have given us a Municipal Corporation Reform; that they have given us a Poor Law Amendment Bill. They who ought to come trembling and shame-stricken to excuse their failings towards the people, rush with insolent clamour before us, and thrust the schedule of their merits in our faces. Thus provoked to examine closely into their pretensions, let us see if their merits be really as great as they pretend them to be. The question of the Reform Bill, I think I have already disposed of. I think I have shewn that all that is bad in it we owe to the Whigs, and all that is good we gained ourselves. And with respect to the constitution for India—Why, Gentleman, India is a long way off; and we must wait until we know for certain that it works



well for the poor people of that country before we praise its authors. At present all we know for certain is, that the granting of a constitution to India has served the Whigs to give three of their followers places of 12,000*l.* a-year each. Let us pass on then to the Emancipation of the Negroes. Well, they did pass a measure—a bungling measure—putting back the hour of freedom in the West Indies for seven years; they called the blacks apprentices instead of slaves; and they made the people of England pay twenty millions for the misnomer; and the distribution of that twenty millions has been most unjustly made. Is this a great merit? Gentlemen, it was not the Whigs, but the swelling indignation of the English nation, excited and directed by truly religious men, principally the Dissenters—amongst them none were more active, more earnestly sincere, than the worthy man who sits at the head of this table: none, I say, more energetic, more zealous, than your Chief Magistrate, Mr. BLAIR. Him and his like, it was, that forced the Whigs, and that would as certainly have forced the Tories, to put an end to the monstrous anomaly of a people clamorous for freedom themselves, holding their fellow-men in hopeless slavery. But the bill by which it is effected is a bungling bill, and that is the only part that belongs to the Whigs; and if it is such a merit, why do they not recall Lord STANLEY to the ministry, for he it was who concocted the details.

Oh! but the Municipal Corporation Reform—the Whigs have given us that at least. Yes, Gentlemen, when they could not avoid it, they gave us the Municipal Corporation Reform. They gave it to us, but, as you all know, mixed with as much Toryism as they dared to put into it. They have given it to England, but they have not given it to Ireland. Oh! yes, I understand—The Lords, the Lords would not suffer them to do so. The Lords interfered between the people of Ireland, and the beneficent intention of the Whigs. Yes, the Lords are opposed to every measure of justice. The Lords have set themselves in array against the People. The Lords are resolved to be sole rulers; the friends of corruption; the enemies of the People: and when the People gird up their loins for to fight, and cry out, “We are ready, down with the Lords,” up starts my Lord JOHN RUSSELL, and, with small monotonous accents, such as you might expect to hear from a Chinese mandarin on a chimney-piece, tells us that he is opposed to all organic changes; that the Lords must not be disturbed in their constitutional power of doing wrong. And thus the injustice of the Lords is pleaded in bar of the People’s right; and the Whig Ministers interfere to shield the Lords from the just vengeance of the insulted People. Was there ever such chicanery? I say, again, that the Whigs have given to England a Municipal Corporation Reform, but dashed and brewed with Toryism, and they have not given even that much to Ireland.

But, Gentlemen, there is another measure which they claim merit for,—the Poor Law Amendment Bill. Now I know that many sincere and honest politicians, worthy, upright, and good men, and true patriots, supported that Bill, thinking it a good one. And many think so still; but I differ with them: and, as it is always my way to speak out my sentiments upon public matters, I will not now shrink from declaring what I think of this Poor Law Amendment Bill. I will speak without fear, favour, or affection. Gentlemen, I think it is a bad Bill, a harsh and unjust Bill; false in principle, and oppressively and cruelly worked out: and I believe that its authors, mark! I say its authors, not its supporters, meant it to raise rents to be a



landlord's bill. But, passing that by, I think it is false in principle, because it assumes that the poor have no right to relief, and that it is a crime in them to demand it, a crime which deserves punishment; and most cruelly they are punished. But, Gentlemen, the poor have a right to relief, under certain circumstances; a right resting upon the law of nature and the law of the land, a right as good, as sound as the right of any rich man to his estate. Now I am not standing here as the advocate of the Old Poor Law system. I know that under that system every sort of gluttony, every sort of fraud, every sort of oppression, was perpetrated with impunity; that there was no redress, no punishment, however deep the injury, however atrocious the crime. I know that there was no knave so sordid but he could find some brawling brother knave at the bar to help him; no villain so dire but he could find some sympathizing villain in the jury-box or on the Bench to bear him harmless, aye, even to applaud his cruelty. But if the Old Poor Law system was bad, does it follow that the working of the New Poor Law system is good? Look at the rules with respect to out-door relief. Look at the regulations of the poor-houses. Look at the difficulty, nay, the impossibility, of any helpless person obtaining redress from oppression. Gentlemen, I object to the Bill because it provides no real protection for the poor. Adding insult to injury, it provides what are called Guardians of the poor: but they are not Guardians of the poor, they are Guardians of the rate-payers—Guardians of their own interests; and you all know, when self-interest and charity strive, which will go to the wall in the long run. Gentlemen, I have given you one picture to-night, let me try my hand at another. Let me suppose an aged woman, who, after toiling honestly and diligently for fifty or sixty years, and thereby adding largely to the capital of the Country, is at last reduced in her extreme age to destitution. And why is she so reduced? Because her sons, her dutiful and generous sons, who would have worked their heart's blood out rather than suffer her to want, had been pressed for a man of war, and had been killed in battle, killed fighting for England; and she had none left to help her. Gentlemen, I pray you to remember that you all have or had mothers. Well! this destitute and miserable creature is driven to demand relief of the Guardians of the poor. She is shewn into a room where thirty or forty men are seated round a table, all interested to refuse her request. She is questioned rudely, harshly, perhaps brutally; I have heard of such things; and, finally, she is dismissed without relief. Famine pinches, and she goes to the Magistrates; but they tell her they will not, or cannot, assist her under the New Poor Law Act, and that she must write to the Central Board of Commissioners. Gentlemen, she is old, extremely old; she cannot read or write, she scarcely knows what London means, and she is quite unable to comprehend what a Central Board means. Thus bewildered and starving, staggering under the accumulated weight of poverty and age, and sorrow and famine, she goes home to die, and you hear no more of her, save, perhaps, the bell which tolls for her funeral.

Gentlemen, I will take the other side; I will suppose that relief has been ordered—that is, she has been sent to the Workhouse. But now I will take the liberty of changing the person; I will no longer suppose her an aged woman, whose sons have fallen in battle; I will suppose her to be a sickly, sorrowing widow, whose husband has thus fallen, leaving her with an orphan girl of four or five years old. She goes to a place surrounded with high walls, like a prison; the door opens, and she is met



by a man with a bundle of keys, like a gaoler; she enters, and finds herself, not in a house of relief, but of punishment; her child is torn from her; it remains within the same walls, but she must not see it; the mother must not speak to her child. It is in vain she cries out for pity; in vain that she rolls at their feet in her agony; that, broken-hearted, she shrieks out that since the death of its father the company of that child is the only consolation which her withered heart could feel; that she cannot, that she will not, part with her child. She has committed the unatoneable sin of being poor; and she is punished in a way which no civilized age or nation before has ever inflicted, even on the worst of malefactors; for who ever heard of a criminal being refused the consolation of seeing his children? I know but of one example before this time. NAPOLEON, because he was the stern enemy of the English Oligarchy, was condemned by them to die upon a rock in the ocean, far from his wife and child: and now, in the same spirit, when the poor mothers of England become a burthen upon the luxury of that same Oligarchy, they also are condemned to be separated from their children.

Gentlemen, hitherto I have only given you imaginary cases; but I will now give you something more. I will give you an authenticated instance of the humanity of the new regulation with respect to the out-door relief. I have the authority of Mr. CHADWICK for this fact now in my pocket. In Birmingham, there is one of those charitable institutions so honourable to the English character—an asylum for the deaf and dumb. Two parish children were received into it, housed, fed, and taught, for the sum of eight pounds a-year; but the New Poor Law came into operation, a Union was formed, a Board of Guardians of the poor appointed, and, under the pretence of not affording out-door relief, these unfortunate children are taken away from their asylum and cast into the poor-house, there to live and die like brutes; for you all know that a deaf and dumb child untaught must live and die like a brute. Gentlemen, I am happy to be able to inform you, that this cruelty has been abated: but how? not from any compunction on the part of the Guardians, but from the powerful intercession of two Ladies, the one the wife of a Tory Nobleman, the other the sister of a Whig Peer. Without any communication with each other, without any consideration of the politics of their relatives, but solely actuated by their own feminine and generous feelings (and, oh! how infinitely superior women are in all the generous feelings which exalt human nature), these noble Ladies interfered, and the cruelty was abated. The boy was restored to the asylum, and the girl would have been so, but that her education was nearly completed. Such are the fruits of this Whig Poor Law! But how many other sins against liberty have they not committed and supported. Look at their support of the Corn Laws; look at their oppression of the Dissenters; look at church rates; look at their Church Bill, which they boasted to be quite to the satisfaction of the Archbishops and Bishops of England, and which, consequently, could not be satisfactory to the people of England. Look at the tenacity with which they clung to the taxes on knowledge, and still how they cling to the paltry penny tax, I believe for the sake of the tyrannical clauses of the Bill, which provides for it. But, above all, Gentlemen, look to their conduct, their heartless, inhuman conduct, upon the subject of that most detestable system of Infant Slavery in the Factories. They opposed and baffled Mr. SADLER's and Lord ASHLEY's humane plans for the protection of the children, and



they are now endeavouring to restore a twelve hours' Bill ; thus doing their utmost to re-establish and perpetuate a system, the most monstrous in cruelty that ever stained and disgraced civilization ;—a system by which sixty or seventy thousand wretched children—English children—are condemned to hopeless and ceaseless misery ; their young hearts filled with grief, their young bones with disease, and their minds, their very souls, corrupted by the tortures they suffer and the debaucheries they are forced to witness. I speak not of any thing asserted without proof ; I speak of cruelty which has been proved over and over again before Committees of the House, of children of seven or eight years of age forced to walk from twenty-five to forty miles in the day, besides the labour of their hands ; of wretched little creatures toiling until they fell asleep, and still making the motion of work with their hands, exposed every moment to be seized and dragged into the machinery : and how awakened ? by a brute in human form striking them on their heads or arms with a large staff called a billy-roller, aye, sometimes breaking their limbs and fracturing their skulls. And this system, this soul-sickening system, the Whigs are endeavouring to perpetuate ; and they have found medical men to say, that it was not hurtful to the children's health ! The earth ought to gape and swallow them ! But there is a just God on high, and the groans of these unhappy children will reach his footstool, and his vengeance will be poured down, even upon the whole nation, if it suffers the abomination to continue.

Gentlemen, to what does all this discourse tend ? Why, to shew you that you cannot trust the Whigs. That if you trust their love of liberty, they will give you the Reform Bill as a final measure, and tell you it goes too far. If you trust their justice, they will give you a Coercion Bill. If you trust their humanity, they will consign your mothers to the new bastiles, and your children to the factories. Trust, then, nothing but their fears. Tell your Representatives, your true, your Radical Representatives—tell the honest men who have hearts to feel and heads to work, to abandon the Whigs to their own devices. Let the people stand aloof ; let the Whigs fight their battles with the Tories as they can. Then will be seen what strength they possess. Then will be known whether it was they who gave us reform, or we who took it. Then will be seen whether they can check, or divert, or regulate the movement of liberty. Then they will find that reform is no state-machine for them to sport with—no car of Juggernaut to crush its votaries and enrich its priests ; but like that heavenly chariot of Milton—the chariot of paternal Deity—it is itself instinct with spirit ; convoyed by reason ; resplendent with the brilliant fires of freedom, careering onwards in its course, majestic, and neither Belial, nor Mammon, nor Moloch, shall stand before it.

Gentlemen, I know of only one obstacle to this mode of proceeding on the part of the English Radicals, and it is a considerable obstacle, but not, I think, insurmountable. Mr. O'CONNELL and the Irish Radicals have declared their resolution to support the present Ministers under every circumstance ; and Mr. O'CONNELL has even gone so far as to revile and menace the English Radicals who shall dare to separate from the Whigs. This is neither a very wise, nor just, nor politic proceeding on the part of Mr. O'CONNELL ; but still we must consider, that if he and his coadjutors think, and speak, and feel as Irishmen alone, they are scarcely to be blamed. With them a change of system is a question



of life and death. They argue, that if a Tory Government were to be re-established in Ireland firmly, they would let loose all their Orange ferocity, and the Country would be deluged with blood; and they might add, that the lives of O'CONNELL and the other leading patriots would be taken, either by a judicial murder or by assassination. Horrible as this may appear, we are entitled to say it and believe it; for already the organs of the Orange faction have called for the assassination of Mr. O'CONNELL: and if they write thus, we may well suppose their deeds would not belie their words—we have a right to treat them as assassins. It is no wonder, then, that, feeling the benefits of Lord MULGRAVE's honest, firm, and liberal Government, and identifying him with the Whigs, they should cling to the latter, and should dread a change. Gentlemen, these things are to be cared for, and the Radicals of England have cared for them. For two years they have borne the misconduct of the Whigs, and given them their support, I believe chiefly out of consideration for Ireland. But there is a point beyond which compassion would become weakness. The English Patriots cannot sacrifice the rights and liberty of England for the sake of an ephemeral tranquillity in Ireland. Mr. O'CONNELL and his friends should consider that Lord MULGRAVE is, after all, but an accident; and an accident may deprive them of him. He may die, or he may be recalled—aye, recalled by the Whigs—for assuredly his policy is too vigorous and liberal to belong to that school. They should recollect, also, that if Liberty is lost in England, it will not be found in Ireland. And, after all, what have they really to fear? O'CONNELL has completely established his National Association. It comprises nearly all the physical, and all the moral strength, and all the patriotism, and all the spirit, and all the intelligence of the nation. It is perfect in its organization; mature in its design—a giant, growing every day and every hour stronger, and already of strength sufficient to bid defiance to an ephemeral Tory tyranny. However, they know their own policy best; but so do the English Radicals: and again I say, that they cannot sacrifice the rights of England merely to keep a doubly-dealing faction in power.

Gentlemen, I have occupied your attention too long; and yet there is one more point on which I should like to touch—I mean, the Reform of the House of Lords. Gentlemen, you may remember when I last met you in this Hall there was a very worthy Tory gentleman, Captain MUTTLEBURY, who endeavoured to convince us that we were doing a very foolish thing in calling for a Reform of the Lords. That worthy Tory, who, by the way, was not very well treated—and, I think, this is a fitting time to say so—he was not well treated, I say, because we are continually and justly taunting the Tories with sneaking into holes and corners, and being afraid to meet their fellow-citizens face to face; and yet, when Captain MUTTLEBURY met us manfully, and with great courtesy of demeanour endeavoured to support his cause by argument, he was not listened to. Now that was wrong; for ours is a good cause, and needs no unfair support.

But passing that over, Gentlemen, I wish to draw your attention to Captain MUTTLEBURY's argument, because it has since been caught up and much used by the Tory newspapers and Tory speakers. Your Radicals, they say, pretend to love liberty: hear, then, what that great champion of



democracy, CHARLES FOX, says ; " Liberty cannot exist, if the three branches of the Government are not kept distinct and independent." Now, Gentlemen, it is extremely dangerous to make application of a great man's sayings, and draw conclusions without thoroughly understanding what that great man meant. And this danger I think neither Capt. MUTTLEBURY, nor the Tories who have caught up his argument, have escaped. Gentlemen, Mr. Fox made use of this expression quoted to prove the necessity of a Reform of the House of Commons. He argued that if the Lords nominated a majority of the Commons, as they then did, and the King created the Lords, the whole power would really rest in the Crown ; and hence it was that he urged the adoption of that celebrated resolution of Mr. DUNNING, namely, that " the influence of the Crown had increased, was increasing, and ought to be diminished." But Mr. Fox never did say, nor meant to say, that the three branches of the Government were to shew their independence by each rejecting the measures proposed by the other : that the Commons should reject every bill sent from the Lords ; the Lords, every bill sent from the Commons ; and that the King should put his veto upon all bills coming from either. Still less that the Lords should, to shew their independence, reject common sense and justice, as well as the bills which came up from the Commons. If he had said so, it would have been tantamount to declaring this Constitution to be more absurd than any thing that ever emanated from the mouth of an idiot. No, Gentlemen ; what Mr. Fox meant may be illustrated by a very trite simile. The three branches of the Government are like three streams, each having a different source, not to trickle shallow and babbling, each in their own little channel, until all were lost in the ocean of anarchy ; but uniting to form one deep and fertilizing stream for the general benefit of the land. And I should be glad to know how this view of the matter militates against this proposed Reform of the House of Lords.

Take, for instance, the elective plan, the worst of any yet proposed ; would the Lords be less independent for good, that is, for working out the welfare of the nation, if they were elected by the people ? Less independent for their caprices, for their insolence, for their tyranny, I admit—but for all good purposes, as independent as ever. The Commons are elected, that is, they spring from the people ; the Crown itself is elective, I do not mean to say every king is elected : no, the people from whom all power springs, knew that such a system would be injurious to themselves : but they made the crown itself elective, that is, they turned off one dynasty and adopted another. Yet the crown is not the less independent for good. One would think that the Tories imagined all government, and especially that part, called Lords, to be something quite distinct from and adverse to the nation. That the people were only made to crouch, and fawn, and be fleeced, and that the Lords were made to trample upon them and to fleece them ; but it is not so, Lords do not drop from heaven like manna upon the land. They spring from the people, and must be controlled by the people ; for though they are not like manna, they may become like locusts. Gentlemen, they spring from the body politic in the same manner that warts and wens spring from the natural body ; and though I have heard of some persons so curious in their fancies, so strange in their tastes, as to consider such excrescences ornamental, I never yet heard of anybody so besotted as when the wart or wen endangered their lives not to have it removed, or cut off. Now I do not wish to have the Lords



cut off; but I do wish to warn them, that they are ceasing to be ornamental, and are becoming dangerous to the vitality of the nation. And as the Tories have been good enough to give us an extract from one of Mr. Fox's speeches, making their own application of it, I will, to illustrate my meaning, give them an extract from another speech of his, and leave them still to make the application. That great man, arguing in favour of Reform, said, "I am told that if I make this House really the people's House, I shall make it so strong that it will sweep away both the King and the Lords. I do not believe it," he exclaimed; "I do not believe it: but if Kings and Lords are found to be injurious to the welfare of the nation, why let them be swept away; for they were made for the people, the people were not made for them."

Now, then, Gentlemen, let the Lords take warning. Hitherto we have only demanded a reform of their House; but if they continue to insult and trample upon the nation, the cry will of necessity be, Up with the People, and down with the Lords. But long before such a crisis can arrive I trust we shall obtain justice. Justice for Ireland—justice for England—justice for all.

**FINIS.**